IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

HERBERT HEINZMANN	:
349 Middle Park Dr.	:
Souderton, PA 18964	:
·	: CIVIL ACTION
Plaintiff,	:
•	: No
v.	:
	:
USM, INC.	
1700 Markley St., Suite 100	: JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
Norristown, PA 19401	;
and	:
EMCORE GROUP, INC.	:
1700 Markley St., Suite 100	:
Norristown, PA 19401	:
	:
Defendants.	:
	*

CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, Herbert Heinzmann, (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff"), by and through his undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

I. Introduction

1. Plaintiff has initiated this action to redress violations by USM, Inc. and EMCORE Group, Inc. (hereinafter referred to collectively as "Defendants") for violations of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act ("ADEA" - 29 U.S.C. §§ 621 et. seq.), the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA" - 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et. seq.), the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA" - 29 USC §§2601 et. seq.), and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA"). As

¹ Plaintiff's PHRA claims are not specifically pleaded below because these claims are not fully administratively exhausted. However, Plaintiff's claims under the PHRA will mirror his ADA and ADEA claims identically. Thus, Plaintiff will move to amend and include such claims after they have been administratively exhausted with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ("PHRC").

a direct consequence of Defendants' unlawful actions, Plaintiff seeks damages as set forth herein.

II. Jurisdiction and Venue

- 2. This action is initiated pursuant to the ADA, the ADEA, and the FMLA. This Court may properly maintain personal jurisdiction over Defendants because Defendants' contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over Defendants to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standard set forth by the United States Supreme Court in <u>International Shoe Co. v. Washington</u>, 326 U.S. 310 (1945) and its progeny.
- 3. The United States District Court for the District of Pennsylvania has original subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 because the claims arise under laws of the United States. This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's state law claims because they arise out of the same circumstances and are based upon a common nucleus of operative fact.
- 4. Venue is properly laid in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. sections 1391(b)(1) and (b)(2), because Defendants reside in and/or conduct business in this judicial district and because a substantial part of the acts and/or omissions giving rise to the claims set forth herein occurred in this judicial district.
- 5. Plaintiff exhausted his administrative remedies because he timely filed a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and now files the instant lawsuit within ninety (90) days of receiving a right-to-sue letter and/or notices of case closure from the EEOC (as to his claims under the ADA and the ADEA).

III. Parties

- 6. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 7. Plaintiff is an adult with an address as set forth above.
- 8. Defendant USM, Inc. is a corporation with a location at the above-captioned address (the location at which Plaintiff worked) that engages in providing facilities maintenance services throughout the United States.
- 9. Defendant EMCORE Group, Inc. is a leading provider of essential facilities maintenance services. Upon information and belief, Defendant USM, Inc. is a subsidiary of Defendant EMCORE Group, Inc.
- 10. Upon information and belief, because of their interrelation of operations, common ownership or management, centralized control of labor relations, common ownership or financial controls, and other factors, Defendants are sufficiently interrelated and integrated in their activities, labor relations, ownership and management that they may be treated as a single and/or joint employer for purposes of the instant action.
- 11. At all times relevant herein, Defendants acted by and through their agents, servants, and employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for the benefit of Defendants.

IV. Factual Background

- 12. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 13. Plaintiff is a 54-year-old male.
 - 14. Plaintiff was hired and began work for Defendants in or about July of 2003.

- 15. At the time of his termination from Defendants, on or about January 16, 2017 (discussed further *infra*), Plaintiff was employed with Defendants as a Supplier Service Representative.
- 16. During Plaintiff's approximate 13.5 years of employment with Defendants, he was a dedicated and hard-working employee, who performed his job well.
- 17. In fact, throughout the course of Plaintiff's employment with Defendants, he scored generally favorable on his performance reviews and even held an interim supervisory position.
- 18. Towards the end of Plaintiff's employment with Defendants, he disclosed to Defendants that he suffered from various health conditions, including but not limited to bi-lateral hearing loss, which limited Plaintiff's ability to hear, and Anxiety, which (at times) limited Plaintiff's ability to perform some daily life activities, including but not limited to sleeping, working, and engaging in social interaction.
- 19. In or about November of 2016, Plaintiff requested a reasonable accommodation for his aforementioned hearing condition, including but not limited to a hearing device for his phone that would regulate the volume; however, Defendants never engaged in the interactive process to determine if they could accommodate Plaintiff's hearing condition.
- 20. Additionally, in or about December of 2016, Plaintiff requested time off from work under the FMLA to care for and treat for his aforesaid mental health conditions.
- 21. Plaintiff's request for time off from work under the FMLA was granted and shortly before his January, 2017 termination from Defendants (discussed further *infra*), Plaintiff utilized FMLA leave.

- 22. On or about January 16, 2017, Plaintiff was terminated from his employment with Defendants, purportedly due to a reduction in business.
- 23. In connection with his termination from Defendants in January of 2017, Plaintiff was presented with an offer of severance to waive any claims he may have against the company (including claims under the ADA, ADEA and FMLA) and to not apply for re-hire; however, Plaintiff did not accept this offer.
- 24. Because Defendant's claim that Plaintiff's termination was part of a purported reduction in force (RIF), they provided Plaintiff with a Notice of Separation and listed the ages of terminated employees, which upon information and belief, contained incorrect information, as Plaintiff himself was not even included on the list; therefore, Defendants provided Plaintiff with improper and/or inaccurate notifications required by the Older Workers Benefit Protection Act ("OWBPA").
- 25. When Plaintiff asked for the aforesaid list of individuals who had been laid off to be corrected and to be sent the revised version, Krista Morse, Director of Human Resources, responded by stating "No corrections to the letter are needed. Thank you."
- 26. In connection with Defendants purported RIF, other younger and/or non-disabled employees, who were less qualified than Plaintiff were not terminated.
- 27. Furthermore, while Defendants represented to Plaintiff that his position was being eliminated, upon information and belief, Defendants continued to seek other, younger and non-disabled applicants to fill positions similar to that of Plaintiff's (even on the same day as Plaintiff's termination).

- 28. Despite performing his job well with Defendants for approximately 13.5 years, Plaintiff was suddenly terminated as part of an alleged layoff, while other non-disabled, younger employees with less experience and less qualifications were retained.
- 29. Plaintiff believes that the stated reason for his termination is completely pretextual because: (1) he was terminated shortly after taking FMLA-qualifying leave (a reasonable accommodation under the ADA); (2) he was terminated shortly after requesting a reasonable accommodation for his hearing condition; (3) upon information and belief, individuals with less seniority, experience, skills, and qualifications than Plaintiff, who were younger and non-disabled, were retained for the same or similar positions as he once held; and (4) Defendants continued to advertise and seek younger applicants for positions that were similar to that of Plaintiff's (despite telling Plaintiff that his job had been eliminated).

Count I <u>Violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA," as amended)</u> ([1] Actual & Perceived & Record of Disability Discrimination; [2] Retaliation; [3] Failure to Accommodate) - Against Both Defendants —

- 30. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 31. Plaintiff has and continues to suffer from qualifying disabilities under the ADA, which, on occasion, limit some of his daily life activities (discussed *supra*).
- 32. Shortly before Plaintiff's termination from Defendants in January of 2017, Plaintiff requested an accommodation for his hearing condition and also requested/took medical leave related to his aforementioned health conditions/disabilities.
- 33. Shortly after taking medical leave for his Anxiety, Plaintiff was terminated from Defendants for completely pretextual reasons.

- 34. Plaintiff seeks relief herein for his termination because such actions by Defendants were motivated by Plaintiff's: (1) known or perceived health problems; (2) record of health conditions; and/or (3) due to Plaintiff's requests for reasonable accommodations.
- 35. Plaintiff further believes and therefore avers that Defendants failed to accommodate his disability by refusing to engage in the interactive process with him to determine if his hearing condition could be accommodated.
 - 36. These actions as aforesaid constitute violations of the ADAAA.

<u>Count II</u> <u>Violations of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act ("ADEA")</u> (Wrongful Termination-Age Discrimination) - Against Both Defendants —

- 37. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 38. Plaintiff was terminated as part of an alleged reduction in force; however, younger employees with less seniority, experience, skills, and qualifications were retained in the same and/or substantially similar positions as Plaintiff once held.
- 39. Furthermore, following Plaintiff's termination, Defendants continued to advertise and seek younger individuals for positions that were substantially similar to that of Plaintiff's.
- 40. Plaintiff believes and avers herein that his advanced age was a determinative factor in his termination.
 - 41. These actions as aforesaid constitute unlawful retaliation under the ADEA.

<u>Count III</u> <u>Violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA")</u> (Interference & Retaliation) - Against Both Defendants —

- 42. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 43. Plaintiff was an eligible employee under the definitional terms of the FMLA, 29 U.S.C. § 2611(a)(i)(ii).
- 44. Plaintiff requested leave from Defendants, his employer(s), with whom he had been employed for at least twelve months pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C.A § 2611(2)(i).
- 45. Plaintiff had at least 1,250 hours of service with the Defendants during his last full year of employment.
- 46. Defendants are engaged in an industry affecting commerce and employ fifty (50) or more employees for each working day during each of the twenty (20) or more calendar work weeks in the current or proceeding calendar year, pursuant to 29 U.S.C.A § 2611(4)(A)(i).
- 47. Plaintiff was entitled to receive leave pursuant to 29 U.S.C.A § 2612 (a)(1) for a total of twelve (12) work weeks of leave on a block or intermittent basis.
- 48. Defendants committed interference and/or retaliation violations under the FMLA by terminating Plaintiff: (1) for requesting and/or exercising his FMLA rights; (2) by considering Plaintiff's FMLA leave needs; and/or (3) to prevent him from taking further FMLA-qualifying leave in the future.
 - 49. These actions as aforesaid constitute violations of the FMLA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an order providing that:

- A. Defendants are to be prohibited from continuing to maintain their illegal policy, practice, or custom(s) of discriminating against employees based on their disabilities, need for accommodations, and age, and are to be ordered to promulgate an effective policy against such discrimination/retaliation/interference and to adhere thereto;
- B. Defendants are to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff, and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for Defendants' illegal actions, including but not limited to back pay, front pay, salary, pay increases, bonuses, medical and other benefits, training, promotions, pension, and seniority. Plaintiff should be accorded those benefits illegally withheld from the date he first suffered the aforesaid unlawful actions at the hands of Defendants until the date of verdict;
- C. Plaintiff is to be awarded liquidate and/or punitive damages as permitted by applicable law, in an amount believed by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish Defendants for their wilful, deliberate, malicious and outrageous conduct, and to deter Defendants or other employers from engaging in such misconduct in the future;
- D. Plaintiff is to be accorded any and all other equitable and legal relief as the Court deems just, proper, and appropriate;
- E. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable legal fees as provided by applicable federal and state law;
- F. Any verdict in favor of Plaintiff is to be molded by the Court to maximize the financial recovery available to Plaintiff in light of the caps on certain damages set forth in applicable federal law;

G. Plaintiff's claims are to receive a trial by jury to the extent allowed by applicable law. Plaintiff has also endorsed this demand on the caption of this Complaint in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38(b).

Respectfully submitted,

KARPF, KARPF, & CERUTTI, P.C.

By:

Ari R. Karpf, Esquire 3331 Street Road Two Greenwood Square, Suite 128 Bensalem, PA 19020

(215) 639-0801

Dated: July 26, 2017

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

HERBERT HEINZMANN

CIVIL ACTION

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7/26/2017· Date	Attorney-at-l	Plaintiff Attorney for						
(215) 639-0801	(215) 639-4970	akarpf@karpf-law.com						
Telephone	FAX Numbe	r E-Mail Address						
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JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. ISEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.

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110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY 102 Proceedings & Ejectment 103 Rent Lease & Ejectment 1040 Torts to Land 1050 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 340 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting X 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 448 Education	PERSONAL INJUR 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability PRISONAL PROPER 385 Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITIO Halbeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Oth 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	Y	5 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 0 Other LABOR 0 Fair Labor Standards Act 0 Labor/Management Relations 10 Railway Labor Act 1 Family and Medical Leave Act 10 Other Labor Litigation 11 Employee Retirement 1 Income Security Act 1 MMIGRATION 2 Naturalization Application 35 Other Immigration Actions	* 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 * 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 **PROPERTYRIGHTS** □ 820 Copyrights □ 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application □ 840 Trademark **SOCIAL SECURITY** * 861 HIA (1395ff) □ 862 Black Lung (923) □ 864 SSID Title XVI ¹ 865 RSI (405(g)) **FEDERAL TAX SUITS** □ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) □ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	0 375 False Claims Act 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) 0 400 State Reapportionment 0 410 Antitrust 0 430 Banks and Banking 0 450 Commerce 0 460 Deportation 0 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations
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VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:		IS A CLASS ACTIO		EMAND S	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND	if demanded in complaint: : X Yes 'No
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